

East Dean & Friston Neighbourhood Plan



Shaping East Dean, Friston, Birling Gap and Crowlink for the future

Minutes of a Meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group held in the East Dean and Friston Village (Small) Hall on Tuesday 23 January 2024 starting at 7.30 pm.

NPSG Members Present: Lesley Durso (Acting Chair), Tim Pontin, Jonathan Timberlake and Cllr David White

In attendance: Alison Eardley (Planning Consultant); Katrina Larkin (Deputy Clerk)

No members of the public were present

1. **Apologies:** - Cllr Bustard, Cllr Fowler, and Maria Stack
2. **Minutes of the previous meeting:** - the minutes of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meeting held on 5th December 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Acting Chair.
3. **Membership**
There had been no responses to the invitation published in the January Parish Magazine. A fresh invitation would be placed in the next available issue **ACTION: KL**. An approach would be made to a local architect who was willing to assist NPSG without becoming a member **ACTION: LD/KL**
4. **Project Plan Update**
The Group reviewed the Project Plan version dated 12 December 2023 and the following points were noted;
 - Row 15: Initial meeting with SDNPA had been completed. The Authority would not offer an informal screening, but as the parish Plan would probably not put forward any sites for development this need not cause delay.
 - Row 6: Social media updates –the clerk had issued an update in December based on the article placed in the parish magazine. A publicity folder would be compiled and a coordinated timetable used for sending out future publicity across all available media simultaneously. **ACTION: TP to draft a communications strategy; KL to organise a meeting with TP and SA; KL to request County Cllr Shing to assist via his periodic newsletters.**
 - Row 19: Draft Design guidance – extend into March
 - Row 22: Local Housing Needs Assessment – AECOM had reported, but AE would check whether they had taken on board the SDNPA’s report dated 18 December 2023 **ACTION: AE**
 - Row 23: Audit of Local Green Spaces - done
 - Row 24: Identify significant local views – JT had begun work but would need guidance on criteria and the number that would be reasonable **ACTION: AE/JT**

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- Row 25: Heritage policies – work begun by the SDNPA on the East Dean Conservation Area should be completed and the deadline extended to the end of March **ACTION: KL to circulate the SDNPA draft**
 - Row 28: Environmental impact screening – this should be ready by the end of February **ACTION: AE, who will consult Climate Friends for their input, particularly on energy proposals.** It was noted that Climate Friends also had a project ongoing, gathering biodiversity data with assistance from Wild Business and on land rather than the built environment. This was due for completion around May 2024.
 - Row 29: list non-policy actions – this was complete for the time being
 - Row 30: Take photos for inclusion in the Plan – under way, but more entries would be welcome, and more specific subjects. Photos from the existing Village Design Statement could be re-used as the parish council held the copyright.
 - Row 31: Draft Vision and Objectives – see paragraph 5 below
 - Row 38: Layout and scope of draft NP – to be ready by the end of February **ACTION: AE**
 - Row 39: Draft Introduction to the Parish – to be based on the section in the current Village Design Statement, subject to checking the scope **ACTION: AE**
 - Row 40: Parish profile – the necessary data from the 2021 census was now available **ACTION: AE**
 - Row 42: Design guide approval by parish council – scheduled for April. The Group would request a presentation slot of more than 2 minutes at the Annual Village Meeting on Friday 12 April 2024, and would also provide an update for inclusion in the Annual Village Report.2024.

5. Draft Vision

The Group gave further consideration to the draft Vision statement [see para 4 of the minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2023]. For the purpose of including a very succinct Vision slide in the presentation at the consultation evening on 29 January 2024, the following brief draft was proposed: ‘To secure a thriving and welcoming community that provides a sustainable and inclusive place to live, work and visit’. However, this would not be sufficiently specific for the Plan itself, and the following amended draft was proposed for inclusion in the Plan, and for being published in hard copy for the meeting on 29 January:

Building upon the open and friendly village atmosphere and sensitively preserving the rural and built character of the Parish, our vision for East Dean, Friston, Crowlink and Birling Gap sees this parish continuing to be a thriving and sustainable place to live, work and visit, where everyone can play a full part in their community.

We aim to support householders in celebrating our built heritage and protecting and enhancing our natural environment, whilst promoting healthy living and connectivity for the benefit of all.

Any additional development within the Parish should reflect the priority to provide homes on smaller plots, suitable for downsizing for existing residents as well as for attracting and retaining younger people, and contributing to net zero environmental targets wherever possible.

6. Neighbourhood Plan Task List

The Group reviewed progress on all sections of the Task List (Report Item 6). AE confirmed that she is preparing a draft skeleton of the whole Plan which will be uploaded to Dropbox. In addition, the following points were noted:

- **Section 1: Introduction** – AE has this in hand
- **Section 2: About East Dean and Friston** – TP/JT have the summary of the area in hand; AE will draft the census profile; and the summary of challenges and opportunities facing the area
- **Section 3: Vision, objectives and overarching principles** – for the current draft of the Vision statement see paragraph 5 above. The Group then discussed the relationship between principles (a kind of rule, belief or idea that guides you), and objectives (a goal or desired result that you plan to achieve). For clarity these could be presented in tabular format, with columns for principles and rows below them for specific objectives. Members agreed that more discussion would be needed at the March meeting. However, for the January Consultation evening a rough draft would be needed **ACTION: DW to set up a WhatsApp group to assist LD in drafting.** As a start, the four principles might be: **Social** (promoting community and wellbeing); **Cultural** (protecting the inherited legacy of the parish); **Natural Environment** (to be protected and enhanced); **Built Environment** (to be protected and made more energy efficient). The Consultation slides would use the five Objectives drafted by MB as a starting point, with ‘transport/activity’ as a sixth key objective.
- **Section 4: Spatial Strategy and Section 5: Housing** – AECOM has these in hand. **ACTION: AE to send them initial comments**
- **Section 6: Design Guidance** – AECOM had this in hand. Information on community scale energy was still required **ACTION: KL**; JT is compiling a list of heritage assets to be conserved and AE will assist with criteria **ACTION: AE/JT**
- **Section 7: Local Economy, Employment, Tourism** – in hand. **ACTION: AE to speak to MB**
- **Section 8: Environment, Local Green Space, Local Views** – the Group thanked JT for providing nearly all the data required for this section. Members reviewed a note on existing local green spaces, both designated and undesignated, and agreed to nominate the Bowling Green and the grassed area at the front of The Fridays houses (west side of Gilberts Drive) as additional designated Local Green Spaces. The small total of only 7 ha (approx.) was offset by the availability of the National Trust downland **ACTION: LD to request a map of this from her NT contact.** More input was required on Views, and ideas would be invited at the consultation evening on 29 January. Views should be presented on a map with standpoint and arc shown, with a written description of what could be seen from the standpoint; the breadth and direction of the view; and a justification of its inclusion in the Plan.

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- **Section 9: Getting Around** – LD has supplied maps to local walking groups, who have been requested to comment on local connectivity. The Groups were generally happy with the paths on the downs. On the twittens, maintenance was seen as very important, and the council's action having tree bark laid down each winter was commended – this needed to be done regularly. However, signage on the twittens was poor, and sometimes protruding roots were a danger for elderly people. More handrails would be an advantage for the same reason. The field gate at the Top of The Link needed repair. There was a strong body of opinion in favour of reinstating The Drove. **ACTION: LD to mark all proposals on a map.** MS is leading on cycle routes when maps are ready.

 - **Section 10: Community Facilities** – DW and MB had been in contact with the parish council about this and would provide an update after the next council meeting on 1st February 2024. The Group took note of a list of proposals arising from the Questionnaire, as follows:
 - Enhancing energy performance and renewable technology.
 - Better mobile and WIFI services.
 - Ease/safety of travel:
 - -reduce speed limits;
 - -provide cycle tracks;
 - -footpath provision-to and from Birling Gap.
 - General health and well -being issues.
 - Environmental:
 - -preservation and enhancement of biodiversity;
 - -nature recovery;
 - -protect and enhance natural environment;
 - -provide hedging and trees rather than hard fencing.
 - More local shops.
 - Balance impact of tourists on the environment versus their input to local economy
 - -address parking issues at Birling Gap(parking on verges)

It was noted that the council was considering a rebuild of the cricket pavilion to provide a youth facility. In addition, there was a need for a play area accessible to residents living north of the A259, and perhaps also public toilets or outdoor gym equipment. The Greensward and Horsefield were proposed as locations, though both are in private ownership.

The Deputy Clerk would circulate all these action points to members as soon as possible
ACTION: KL .

7. **Open Evening – Monday 29 January 2024**

The Acting Chair took the meeting through the draft slide sequence to form the basis of the presentation on 29 January. This was agreed with modifications to the slides on principles and objectives as discussed previously [see paragraph 6: Section 3 above] which would be discussed further and agreed on WhatsApp. In addition, TP would speak on the Project

Plan and JT would speak on Environment. There would be four interactive displays: a map for marking views; a map of key biodiversity proposals; a map of road verge proposals; and a map of paths for people to comment on connectivity. Feedback would also be welcome on Design. In addition, there could be a map at the registration point for people to add a dot showing where they lived **ACTION: AE to supply map.**

8. **Photographic Competition**

The Group took note of entries received to date [closing date 31 January 2024] **ACTION: LD to issue a reminder to Residents' Association members.**

9. **Dates of future meetings**

- a) **Consultation evening – Monday 29th January 2024 at 7.30 pm in the Main Hall of the Village Hall**
- b) **Steering Group Meeting – Tuesday 12th March 2024 at 7.30pm in the Small Hall of the Village Hall.**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.10 pm

Signed..... Chairman Date.....